

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2020

The Honorable Douglas W. Domenech
Assistant Secretary
Insular and International Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Domenech:

I write to request that the Office of Insular Affairs continue to make annual payments to the Prior Service Benefits Trust Fund in order to maintain the disbursement of benefits to eligible recipients. Trust Fund Board officials recommend a \$820,600 grant for FY 2020, \$33,300 less than awarded in FY 2019. I support their request.

The Prior Service Benefits Program was established to assist former employees from the Northern Mariana Islands and the now Freely Associated States who served the U.S. Navy Administration or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands for at least five years, from 1944 to 1986. Of the current 803 remaining program members, 168 are from the Northern Mariana Islands, according to Fund officials. These employees were paid very low wages with no employee benefits.

It's important to protect the benefits of retirees who depend on the Prior Service Trust Fund. Because of the Fund, beneficiaries are able to receive small monthly checks to help meet everyday needs. The United States must continue to meet its commitment to these former employees for their service.

Until an alternative funding source can be identified, I request that OIA continue to use Technical Assistance Program funds. Please provide at least \$820,600 for Prior Service Benefits Trust Fund payments for FY 2020.

Please provide full and fair consideration of this request consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress